

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Cable Assembly, LLC

North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Cable Assembly Increases Efficiencies with Lean

Client Profile:

Cable Assembly manufactures specialized cables for General Electric's industrial windmills and for Thomas Built school buses. They excel in a niche market making complex cables for companies requiring hundreds in a high mix (12,000 different parts), low volume assembly. Founded in 1988, Cable Assembly employs 100 people at its facility in Graham, North Carolina.

Situation:

Cable Assembly owners created a mandate that the Graham, North Carolina facility incorporate Lean into their plant based on gains they had witnessed at their sister facilities. The company contacted the North Carolina State University Industrial Extension Service (IES), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

IES Lean specialists Steve Laton and Steve Forrest conducted eight Lean training sessions for Cable Assembly management and workers. Sessions included training in Value Stream Mapping and additional training for a 5S event. "People were amazed at how much time you could save with one-piece flow," said Bob Misiewicz, Cable Assembly's Production Manager, remembering the first Lean session. Production nearly tripled immediately. Cable Assembly workers have taken to Lean and adapted it to suit their particular needs. Communication has also improved. White boards located through the factory floor tell employees exactly how the company is doing in sales and production. On these same white boards, frontline employees can write suggestions. Any employee with a good idea gets a free lunch and sees their ideas implemented almost instantly. "People are not afraid any more," Clements said. "We've got an openness and trust now." New records are set regularly. For example, they used to make \$50,000 of product a week, and now they can do it in a day. "We work smarter, not harder," Misiewicz said. "Employees motivate themselves." As a result of IES' assistance, the company has experienced a reduction in waste, rework, inventory, need for temporary labor, and employee turnover.

Results:

- * Increased sales by \$2.5 million.
- * Realized \$1.59 million in cost savings.
- * Created 40 new jobs.

Testimonial:

"We work smarter, not harder. Employees motivate themselves now."

Bob Misiewicz, Production Manager

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